

Letter from Mabel Hubbard Bell to Eliza Symonds Bell, December 18, 1876, with transcript

Letter from Mrs. Alexander Graham Bell to Mrs. Alexander Melville Bell. 10 East 14th. St. New York December 18, 1876. My dear Mrs. Bell:

I hope Alec. told you why I have delayed answering your last kind letter so long. I could not write distinctly on the cars, and at every stopping place we were so busy that there was time only for a daily letter to Alec. I wanted very much to thank you for the pretty birthday card you sent me and the kind remembrance it brought, but we were speeding homeward then.

Alec has told you of the great sorrow that has come upon our family. Grandmama has been an invalid for many years but with only intervals of suffering. She was always very bright and cheerful and made us all happy. The grandchildren were very fond of her and her death is a great loss, which we hardly realize yet, not only that it has taken her from us, but because the bond between us cousins is loosened. It was she that brought us together, and helped us to know and love each other. As Mama says, "Grandpapa will be more and more lonely," and Mama and my Aunts will miss her every hour. Grandpa's house is not what it was to us when Grandmama's room was the place where we all gathered and she the centre of all. We were all glad to have Alec. with us, and I think he was glad to come, though he seemed in rather low spirits, and not feeling quite well. I had a bright letter from him today and hope he feels better.

He has told you of our trip West and how much we enjoyed it. Papa's business brought him in contact with leading men in every place and they were always attentive in showing the ladies all there was to be seen. One of them, the Superintendent of the Great Western Railroads invited me to "come back and bring my husband, and he would chalk our backs for us". He referred to the chalking of the backs of Chinese emigrants after they have

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passed the custom house examinations and have 2 nothing more to pay and meant he would give us a free pass over his road. We enjoyed San Francisco, and thought it's bay lovelier even than that of Naples. Southern California was rather a dissapointment, the wonderfully fertile districts of which we heard so much alternated with broad stretches of desolate sand deserts, where nothing could grow. It's heat seemed like a dream when but two or three days later we found ourselves among the snow and ice, yet Colorado Springs six thousand feet high is never so cold as it is here, the air was marvelously pure and spring like, and the scenery in its way far grander and wilder than any we saw in Switzerland, even if it has no eternal snow covered mountains. The people say this was the abode of the Gods before they singled on the Trojan War, and I think it is a fit abode for them.

We certainly did enjoy our trip but were glad to get home and in time to see Grandmama.

I hope you and Mr. Bell are quite well and keep comfortable even in this cold weather. Wishing you through December in advance a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year,

I am Affectionately yours, Mabel.